

Teaching as a Graduate Student

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APEC Skills Workshop

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Why teach?

Pros

- Source of funding
- Chance to work with faculty
- Having a (somewhat) structured working schedule
- Getting to know the students
- A learning opportunity for yourself
- A teaching portfolio for the job market, a faculty point of view

Cons

- Opportunity cost: a continued RA appointment with perks
- Teaching takes time and patience
- You might not get great teaching evaluations

How does grad school teaching experience pay off beyond PhD?

- Reduce course prep time – which means time for research!
 - Minimum preparation for a course you taught as instructor of record
 - Medium preparation for a course you TAed
- Learn about expectations – also saves you time from dealing with complains!
 - Giving feedback, grading, dealing with plagiarism
- Job opportunities at liberal arts colleges
 - Many are hidden gems: work-life balance, funding to support research
 - Tend to favor people who went to a LAC but not without exceptions
- Many research universities value teaching, too!

Teaching opportunities

- TA at APEC, SPH, Carlson, etc.
- Instructor at APEC
 - E.g. summer courses, Excel course
- Adjuncting
 - Macalester (contact Amy Damon), Carleton, St. Olaf, Hamline (contact Samantha Cakir), St. Kate (contact Kristine West), Augsburg (contact Ibrahim Keita), St. Thomas ...
- Guest lecture

Lessons learned: what works well

- As a TA, build a rapport with the instructor.
- Invest time on class preparation – tell a good story with what you are going to teach.
- Set rules and boundaries early on and clearly state them in the syllabus.
 - Make-up work/exams, late policy, office hours
- Using active (high-impact) learning strategies.
 - Class experiments, team-based learning, think-pair-share, etc.
- Giving students chances to give feedback and talk about their own challenges
 - Optional one-minute paper, mid-term evaluation, reach out

Lessons learned: what doesn't work well

- Getting challenging/dense with lower-level undergraduate courses.
- Not correcting students in class when they give wrong answers.

Useful mindset

- You can't satisfy every student.
- There are a lot of factors behind learning outcomes that are out of your control.
- Whose problem is it if teaching is under-valued?
- Everything pays off.

Resources for growing your teaching skills

- [Preparing for Future Faculty Program](#)
 - GRAD 8101: develop your own teaching statement (essential for the academic job market)
 - GRAD 8200: get teaching feedback from a faculty
- [UMN Center for Educational Innovation](#)
 - Learn about inclusive course design and how to work with a diverse student body (required for many teaching-oriented jobs)
- [UMN Teaching with Writing Program](#)
 - How to design questions and instructions so it is clear to the students.
- Book: *McKeachie's Teaching Tips* by Svinicki and McKeachie

Q&A

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